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Address...President of the
American Medical Association
Delivered at St. Louis,
May 6, 1873

Thomas Muldrup Logan

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



ROBERT ERNEST COWAN



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A D D R E S S

OF

THOS. M. LOGAN, M. D.

P R E S I D E N T

OF THE,

American Medical Association.

DELIVERED IN ST. LOUIS (MO.), MAY 6TH, 1873.

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THOS. M. LOGAN, M. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN: Just two years ago there was witnessed a spectacle well worthy our contemplation! It was full of significance, and stands forth, unparalleled, in the history of our divine art, from its earliest annals down to the present moment.

Along the Atlantic slope of this vast continent—throughout the length and breadth of the land from Maine to Mexico—were seen, gathering together, one hundred and twenty-one living, aspiring intelligencies,* moved by one thought, nerved by one impulse, animated by one hope—the good of humanity!

Abandoning, for the nonce, the peaceful pursuits of their chosen vocation, relinquishing its rewards, and exposing themselves to all the hazards incident upon velocity of locomotion, westward they steered their beneficent course, borne along the iron pathway cleaved across a continent!

Annulling the opposing conditions of time and space, over three thousand miles they went—“skimming over the valleys,

*These western pioneers of the Association organized themselves, in connection with the members of the Pacific Coast, into a society, at the last meeting in Philadelphia, by the title of the “Rocky Mountain Medical Society,” and elected Washington L. Atlee, M. D., of Philadelphia, President, and John Morris, M. D., of Baltimore, Secretary, to commemorate the auspicious event. All honor to the glorious one hundred and twenty-one!

thundering across the rivers, and panting up the sides or piercing through the hearts of the mountains." Science having made subservient to their bidding those dynamic agencies, more potent than the Genii of Arabian fable, they accomplished in seven days the travel that once consumed more than as many months; and thus they reached the city of the Golden Gate—the Mecca of their pilgrimage.

In the same spirit and with the same purposes with which we this day come together, they met their confreres from different and widely distant regions. They met, not as the mere reflexes of other men's opinions; not to promote those objects which centre in self-interest, but as the independent representatives of a high-toned, liberal profession, to secure the benefits which accrue from singleness of purpose and unity of action. With views as comprehensive as the wide domain of science, they labored with the same unswerving perseverance which has characterized each and every session of this Association during its entire history.

Having in four days accomplished the object of their high mission, they returned, noiselessly, like the great forces which control the universe, everyone to his allotted sphere in life, and ere the lapse of another week, all were once more seen quietly fulfilling the daily duties of their noble calling.

Such a spectacle of moral grandeur, I repeat, never before was witnessed in the history of our Association—never in the annals of medicine. Amazed and confounded, the disloyal in our ranks looked on with staggering doubt; the faithful took part with renewed trust—trust in the power of our organization, the power of its knowledge, and the power to make that knowledge disinterestedly available to the whole profession. As in that wondrous frame whose structure, functions, and relations compose our constant study, the sentient nerves feel keenest at the extremities, so we, the distant dwellers on the Pacific, remote from former centres—the ganglia of its gatherings—continue still to thrill with quickening memories of the benefaction, whose magnitude and value cannot be computed. Neither has the reflex action been lost upon the Association, but permanently stirred up to deepest depths, its members flowed back, the following year, into Philadelphia, like a tidal wave of tenfold volume, in unprecedented numbers. Nor is the influence yet abated. Like yon mighty river, which sweeps with

ever-living, ever-moving waters along the wharves and by the busy marts of this Empire City of the West, carrying rich deposits of fertility and plenty from State to State, in its annual overflowings, to bless the dwellers upon its shores and throughout the vast regions of its lengthened course, so we are here to-day, rejoicing in the strength of our numbers, to scatter far and wide, along the pathway of humanity, the benign influences and free-will offerings of our collective counsel and experience. Herein lies the great catholic principle of our Association. Having a common heritage and a common interest as Americans in each other's welfare and advancement, we throw our portals open wherever we are welcomed, and by the introduction of new material, assimilate new elements into the common mass. Migrating over our vast territory, as our Association has done for more than a quarter of a century—holding its meetings first in the North, then in the South, next in the East, and then in the West, it acts as the irrepressible light and air of heaven, imparting its vivifying influence in all directions and infusing fresh energy into the monotonous existence of the medical practitioner. But the great principle does not stop here. By the influx and efflux of travel, and all the interchanging currents of social and professional relations, the precious germs of our discoveries are engrafted, as soon as known, upon the common stock, and the good fruit is spread abroad in all directions without stint or hindrance. In every city, county, and State, societies like ours are continually springing up, based upon the same unselfish tenets, the individual members, as well as the organizations themselves, being bound together by the adamant chain of a professional and fraternal sympathy, which is destined to encompass the whole land with its ameliorative and recuperative influences. Evermore urging a broader and more complete culture, our Association calls upon all schools and colleges in the land, and upon all who teach in and control them, to exact a high and liberal preliminary education; not so much in ancient classics—though the grace imparted through them adds to the dignity and influence of the physician—but in modern languages, philosophy, and every department of physics and of knowledge; and thus, by the light of general science, to illuminate the technicalities of their special pursuits. Nor has its voice been raised in vain, for every day are being witnessed the incipient symptoms of

a tendency to that scientific training and discipline in inductive reasoning whereby the American mind possesses itself of knowledge at first-hand, without the intervention of European authority. Thus it keeps ever before our ardent gaze the speedy advent of the time foretold by the prescient Agassiz, on the shores of the Pacific, when, instead of sending our youth abroad to be instructed in narrow specialities and the ways of fawning and servility, our home universities will rather be thronged with students from the older nations, who, with the arts and sciences on a broader plan, will be taught to think and act as freemen, as active, independent live men, adapted to the wants of a progressive, practical state of society.

If, in aught that has just been uttered, I have seemed to speak with the enthusiasm of the poet rather than with the soberness of the physician, I know that the reality does not justify the appearance. Of all the impressions derived from the history of our Association, the most vivid, the deepest, the most lasting is that expressed by the indirect results of its meetings.

Organized more than twenty-five years ago, when the profession was in an almost chaotic condition—when medical books were, compared to our times, rare and expensive, and when modes of communication were few and far between, it has proved of incalculable value, as a medium for diffusion of knowledge, for interchange of thought, experience and criticism. More directly, in the several departments of the profession at large, it has kept on duty a corps of volunteers steadily engaged in exploring and defining all the topographical bearings of the scientific field. We may fearlessly assert, that in earnest, enterprising movements of a progressive tendency—which is the distinctive characteristic of the age—no calling presents, more fully or honorably than ours, through these committees, a better measure of advancement. This is made manifest by the great variety and large scope of the reports brought before the Association, and by the discussion of them in the several and appropriate sections, during the last few years. And whereas formerly we were entirely dependent for our literature, in the various branches of the profession, upon foreign authors, we now can boast of an American supply, as various and profound in learning, as it is for the most part correct in literary and classical elegance. In mili-

tary surgery, especially, the proud monuments of our achievements have quickened into activity the chiralurgical world; and the invaluable stores of operative experience and practical knowledge, derived from the recent lamentable civil conflict, elevated the claims of American surgery, both North and South, to an exalted pre-eminence. Our surgeons have *legitimized* certain operations (as recorded in the pages of our Transactions), notwithstanding European prejudices; while religiously cultivating *conservatism* in the largest and fullest application of the term. The same remark applies with equal force to civil practice. I would specially instance ovariectomy. Persistently denounced as "a surgical temerity," by some European surgeons, one of our members,* in Philadelphia, alone, has recorded 264 ovariectomies, with a success of about 70 per cent. Even in the young city of my adoption, containing between 16,000 and 17,000 inhabitants, two† successful trophies have been added, within the last eighteen months, to this triumph of chiralurgical science. The recognition of all this, as the fruit of our labors, may be tardily or unwillingly admitted by those whose prejudices and long settled habits are not easily overcome, and who have, more than once, declared our Association to be a failure. But, sustained by an enlightened public sentiment, and encouraged by the great body of the profession, the American Medical Association has lived to manhood, and will still live, not only for the maturing of its great fundamental object—reform in medical education—but also for the extension of its basis of operations, and the furtherance of those means and instrumentalities, needed in the advancement of the race towards the ultimate accomplishment of its high destiny. My faith, at least, is high and remains unshaken; and for all that has been done by the eminent in talent, learning, and science, I have a heart that overflows with admiration and with gratitude. While for all that is now doing let us have the soul to realize the magnitude of our objects and the import of our aims.

Let me ask who that ever attended the annual meetings would not be willing to acknowledge that he did return home a wiser and a better man? Who will dare deny that the status

* Washington L. Atlee, M.D.

† One by J. H. Wythe, D.D.M.D., and another by G. G. Tyrrell, L.R.C.S.I. and K. and Q.C.P.I.

of the profession is greatly above what it was twenty-five years ago, when (as quoted by my immediate predecessor) the first President declared that "the profession to which we belong, once venerated on account of its antiquity, its varied and profound science, its elegant literature, its polite accomplishments, its virtues, has become corrupt and degenerate, to the forfeiture of its social position, and with it of the homage it formerly received spontaneously and universally." Would not the impartial observer now, in the face of the sublime record to which I have just adverted, rather, with the far-seeing wisdom and stirring words of the same gifted Chapman, hail this organization as an instrumentality coming "forward in the majesty of its might to vindicate its rights and redress its wrongs," and concur with him that, "confiding in our resources, we shall through them maintain the struggle till conducted to victory and triumph?"

But, gentlemen, if the estimate I have rendered of what our Association has done be at all true—if it has made better physicians of us and raised the dignity of the profession—if it be at all true that the infusion of clear and inductive thinking, and the importation of scientific method and scholastic art, have done so much to advance American medicine towards that exalted station among its cognate sciences, to which it is so justly entitled—then so much the weightier are our present responsibilities; so much the louder is the call upon us to sustain our lofty character and position, by increasing the expansive circle of our usefulness, and by extending the range of our scientific resources.

The most formidable impediments which here beset our progress, it is easy to perceive, all resolve themselves clearly into one—defective medical education. We see it in the educators, with a few honorable exceptions, persistently traveling in the same deep ruts of the old, narrow road; we see it in the professorships, too often conferred on those who have never bestowed a single thought to the training of the intelligence; we see it in the low standard of fitness for the doctorate; we see it in an inverse ratio of poverty of results to the largeness of the field of operations; and especially do we feel and see it by the display of powers never before suspected, developed late in life, and under embarrassing deficiencies. So long as this state of things obtains, our medical education will con-

tinue to be all but a confessed and palpable failure. In vain may the cry of "Reform! reform!" be rung with its many changes round the circle of our schools, from Maine to Louisiana, and be re-echoed from our colleges in California and Oregon, so long as it is proclaimed in high places of the profession, that the exigencies of the times and the requirements of humanity exact such a constant supply of medical force, as will hardly permit the acquisition of any greater degree of knowledge and attainments than such as will enable the new-fledged graduate to turn them promptly to clinical purposes. With an apparently reckless inconsiderateness of what might entail a waste of professional intellect, that may possibly be equivalent to the daily loss of threescore and ten years of progress, it has been deliberately argued, in the presence of the assembled Association, that profundity of learning is not essential for the discharge of the physician's function, and that practically the more the sphere of his scientific resources is expanded, so much the less ability does he seem to exhibit in the use of therapeutics. Germany has been instanced to substantiate this hypothesis—Germany, where the crowning glory of modern medicine is found, not only in its minute and exact knowledge of general, special, and comparative anatomy and physiology—not only in those peculiarities of the therapeutics of to-day, that one of the freshest and most advanced thinkers of the age has termed *Restorative Medicine*, in contradistinction to destructive and depressing medication—but rather in "that purer jewel of her crown," unblemished by the slightest taint of selfishness—*Preventive Medicine*; Germany, where cellular pathology is sweeping into oblivion a long catalogue of torturing and depressing agents, and where an amount of research in the natural history of diseases, while putting to shame our own shortcomings, is urging us, in common with the prosecutors of our science everywhere, to more determined efforts in this respect—there, in that "vater-land," its therapeutics have been signalized as "something hardly better than nihilism," and the practice of physic not much more than a "meditation on death."

Now, while I admit that there may be some apparent reasons—apparent only on the surface, however—for the impression thus intended to be conveyed, that the advances in our science have led to skepticism in regard to the remedial

powers of medicine as an art, and especially as to the remedial powers of drugs, at the same time I must be permitted to enter my protest, boldly, against the false position which medicine is thus made to assume in her scientific character. The caution and care, the scientific spirit, and the truly scientific method observed and exercised by the leading minds of our profession, nowadays, are due, in a great measure, to the uncertainty and want of precision in the therapeutic means we possess. Science, being organized knowledge, rejects all probabilities, and in her researches after truth, has found that a large number of acute diseases, occurring in previously sound persons, have a tendency to terminate in the restoration of health, even though no drug be given. This is fact—not skepticism, but knowledge. Again, accumulated observations have established the fact that certain acute diseases run a definite course, and end spontaneously at a certain period from their onset. Conclusions, therefore, drawn from the formerly supposed indefinite duration of these diseases, as to the efficacy of drugs to cut short their duration, are thus proved to be founded on false premises, and consequently are not trustworthy. From these and similar advances in our knowledge, the physician, of expanded mind, instead of being overwhelmed by the effect of such discoveries, or regarding them as sapping the foundation of his faith, looks abroad with a clearer vision, and, embracing in the sweep of his glance all that has led up to, and all that flows from these revelations of science, he comes to entertain a more restricted, and therefore more correct appreciation of the action of drugs. Now, the expression of this scrupulous consideration is taken, as evidence of skepticism by those who jump at conclusions confusedly, clumsily and erroneously. It is precisely on such garbled interpretations of what science has ascertained, that empirics, mingling a crude smattering of knowledge with a cloudy mass of ignorance, have erected their crazy structures of infinitesimal nonsense.

Most emphatically do I condemn such false conclusions, and repudiate the unmerited imputation of skepticism that has been cast upon the great masters of our profession, who, I hold, are not less firm believers than myself as to the value of our present modes of treatment. It is true that with those who understand the real nature of disease—the lesions presenting and the mode in which they have been produced—in

short, pathology; we find belief in the efficacy of the so-called active (perturbative?) treatment, less strong than in those who are not so well informed—whose faith is without knowledge. But this doubt can do no harm so long as it is entertained by a cultivated intelligence, possessed of the proper kind of knowledge. The danger lies in the effect of doubt upon ignorance—upon the unscientific,—doubt of truth and belief in error; doubt in opposition to knowledge, which may prevent the saving of life; and belief, without reason or justification, which, embodied in practice, may kill. Let me explain by a borrowed illustration from high authority*, whose arguments I have just been adapting to my purpose :

“I was one of three who met in consultation concerning a case of apoplexy.” (The case was one of degenerative changes—retrograde metamorphosis of the arteries. One had become so rotten that its wall had given way, its contents had escaped, a clot had formed, and by its mechanical effects had given rise to the symptoms. The heart shared in the degenerative changes. The bleeding had stopped.) “In the opinion of one of my colleagues and myself, the only treatment to be adopted was as follows: To place the patient in the recumbent position, with head and shoulders raised; to enforce absolute rest; to keep the bowels so far loose as to prevent excitement and straining; to apply cooling substances to the head in the event of any heat of the part occurring; to support the patient with light nutritive food, having regard to his habits. The third gentleman protested against the modern system of doing nothing; he was anxious to bleed, to purge, to blister; and when opposed, was not sparing of the term skeptic, etc. * * * Now, the difference in opinion in this case was not due to skepticism on the one side, and justifiable faith, *i. e.*, faith justified by knowledge, on the other, but to knowledge on the one side, and absence of knowledge on the other.”

Imbued with the conviction that the beginning of wisdom is the knowledge of ignorance, and conscious of the difficulties, which, on every hand, beset him, the scientific physician explores cautiously, doubts judiciously and determines slowly. But while he rejects the hastily conceived and immature speculations of the self-satisfied empiric, he does not stand idly by, and let disease run its course unmodified. Knowing that the

* Sir William Jenner, Bart., M.D., D.C.L., F.R.S.

Creator has established certain relations between cause and effect, and that all the phenomena which we witness around us are the result of certain antecedents and not of chance, he seeks to fathom the causes of diseases, and by his knowledge of their course, and of the dangers which threaten the life of the patient, at each stage of their progress, he interferes to prevent, to control and to counteract any untoward consequences, and by the judicious employment of all the rational means at his command, among which pure air, food and stimulants are included, he saves the patient from death. Now, I deny that this treatment can be regarded as *nil* or *expectant*; it is positive, nay, active.

Believing, as I do, that medicine is destined, if her votaries only prove true to their allegiance, to reach that "Ultima Thule" in its history, when the stigma of *uncertain* shall be wiped away from its deductions, and it shall take its rank among the *exact* sciences, I cannot but think, that so long as it may well be doubted if any fact or principle yet obtained in regard to therapeutic agency, in resisting morbid influences, can claim the rigidity and the universality of a positive law,* so long must scientific medicine continue her unwearied efforts after truth, through the realms of physical research—so long widen perpetually her range, through the vast compass of subjects with which it is linked, by the progress of science and the fluctuations of human requirements. A little reflection will show how the profession, which has always assiduously pursued natural knowledge, cannot separate itself from the indirect any more than from the direct influence of science. As a branch of natural science, consisting of an investigation of established laws, medicine must be studied with the same care and caution as other departments of science. There is this difference, it is true, that while the natural philosopher can bring mathematics to his assistance, and the chemist can re-

* Physiology and pathology afford little or no assistance in the adaptation of medicinal agents to particular diseases, nor explain the mode of their operation: e. g., *bark*, in the cure of an ague. No means, yet recognized, inform us whether its operation is to neutralize the *morbid miasm*, or merely to protect the body against its further noxious influence, while Nature's resources repair the injury done.

* Certain it is, that the atmosphere and saturated waters of the Cinchona forests do not exempt their human inhabitants from ague. The same remark applies to every article in the long catalogue of therapeutical agents, as regards the maladies in which experience has proved their efficacy." *Annual address before the Medical Society of the State of New York, February 7th, 1866, by Henry W. Dean, M.D., of Rochester, President.*

sort to analysis and synthesis—while the geologist and zoologist have their starting points of observation and comparison, and the astronomer can weigh and measure the heavenly bodies, predicting phenomena that will transpire in the future, the physician has no such definite powers. These all deal with what is, and has been. Their principles, once determined, are not to be disturbed. But with the physician, instead of fixed, inanimate masses that can be weighed and measured and tested with accuracy, he has to deal with something intangible—a living, moving body, constantly changing, and animated by a spirit, where all the ordinary laws which govern matter are disregarded. Still, the phenomena of organization are equally capable, with those of the inorganic world, of being systematized and brought into correlation, and there is no department of scientific investigation—no province of human thought from which something may not be extracted and pressed into the service of our all-embracing calling.

Viewing nature, then, with an eye to the discovery of truth, the scientific physician finds an identity of design and correlation of structure in all creation. Step by step he traces this from the minutest microscopical cell to the complex organization of the most perfect animal, just as the biologists and physicists of the day are seeking the *true cause*, each in his own sphere, “from the causes of twining in the delicate tendril to the causes of variation in the human species; from the causes and local conditions of atmospheric changes to the causes and physical consequences of the combustion of a fixed star.”*

If such, then, be the ambitious aims of our profession, such its exalted character, and such its capabilities, how incumbent is it on us to strive without ceasing to enlarge the circle of its usefulness and influence by encouraging and sustaining a system of medical education so high in its requirements and so comprehensive in its scope, that it shall keep pace with the advancement of its kindred sciences, to whose possible conquests no bounds can now be set.

Having said this much in the hope of vindicating our profession, in its relations with modern science, from the charge of skepticism or inefficiency, I must, at the hazard of being tedious to you, lest my motives be impugned, disclaim the

* Dr. Aekland: *General Relations of Medicine in Modern Times*, whose line of argument has been adopted above.

slightest intention of taking any undue advantage, or committing the least injustice or a misrepresentation of what I am willing to believe are the honest convictions of those who differ from me, and who, doubtless, are possessed of a common interest in the honor and usefulness of our calling. Possibly I may have misconceived the import of the arguments I have just been combatting, or I may have misapprehended their significance. But when I am made painfully observant of the irregular and imperfect system of training under which the medical student is educated in our country; when I am witness of the superficial qualifications attaching to the conferring of the diploma in some of our colleges; and especially when I hear that system and that practice not only defended but advocated, I feel that I should prove recreant to the duties of the high position I now hold, were I not to give a just expression of my disapprobation, lest silence might be construed into an endorsement of what I conceive to be a most dangerous and demoralizing doctrine. And I am the more strengthened and confirmed in this opinion when I reflect that this Association, whose glorious record I have just sketched, and whose name has already extended far beyond the continent of its origin, was organized chiefly to elevate and ennoble the medical profession.

It is far from my purpose, however, to speak disparagingly of those leading minds in our ranks who have been and still are honorably engaged in teaching—professors who, tried by any standard, which the older civilization of Europe may set up, are entitled to the fame they have honestly won and to our lasting gratitude. These men have ever been among the foremost and most earnest in demanding that upon every son of America the blessing of education should be bestowed, and that the blessing be made as thorough and liberal as possible. Were it not that it might appear invidious, I could cite a long list of living, honorable physicians, from every State of our extended territory, fit successors of Chapman, and Stevens, and Drake, and Warren, and Moultrie, and Wellford, and Dickson, and Pitcher, and Pope, and other departed worthies; men whose reputation is bounded by no geographical limits; citizens of the universal republic of letters, who have labored, in season and out of season and on all occasions, in advocacy of the broadest and completest education. In the hands of such men—who may be styled the trustees of our Association in this particular—I

repose every confidence. We may safely acknowledge them to be fully competent to inaugurate the reformatory measures so imperiously required. Their experience as professors renders them peculiarly sensitive to the evils now existing and to the urgent need for their removal. Their competency in every particular for the undertaking is undeniable, whether in the abstruse and comprehensive, or in the refined and æsthetic; whether in the profound and logical, or in the powerful and commanding; whether in practical wisdom, moral, international or civil, social or medical, in those arts which employ while they improve and bless the people; whether, in a word, in all that makes man useful, virtuous, and happy, and that prepares him for the service of his Creator on earth, or of his fellow men, or of posterity.

May I be pardoned for declaring that such is my creed, and that I glory in it. And I speak with well grounded assurance that, before the close of the present decade, we shall witness a total revolution in our system of medical education. The achievement of this object, as of every other great and good work among men, can only be accomplished by time and patience, by rational inquiry and enlightened perseverance; by a spirit of wisdom equally removed from rashness and hesitancy; from the blindness of self-interest and the spirit of wild innovation.

If I am asked the reason of the faith that is in me, I will point to Old Harvard! Worthy of its ancient prestige and true to its Athenian culture, it has set an example of self-sacrificing devotion, and to day it says to all the medical colleges and schools: "We are resolved that the republic of medicine *shall* receive no detriment from a low standard of admission to or emission from our halls."* Cease, therefore, to ridicule and scoff at our alleged conceit, for the day is fast coming, aye, is already come, "when it will be important for a man to know how he was born into the medical world." If Harvard only keeps on as it has began (and we know too well the material of which it is composed to doubt this), not only will its initial appendage to the M. D. of its diploma be sought after, but it will become a power in the land to incite all the schools to set about the revision and extension of their respective curricula,

* Modern Medicine: Its Status in Modern Society. By Homer O. Hitchcock, A.M. M.D., Michigan.

and every college will haste to elevate itself, after the manner adopted, to a footing of perfect equality, with a diligence and effectiveness such as our Association has been laboring for years, but in vain, to induce. After such reconstruction, the principle of competition would work wonders. Each college would emulate the other by putting forth all its powers to insure, in its graduates, the best possible education. Each would flourish and become influential in proportion to the public favor bestowed upon it, and consequently they would all appeal to the public to judge of the comparative excellence of their diplomas as tests of scientific acquirements and thorough qualification. The public, awakened from indifference concerning the education of those to whose keeping they entrust their very existence, would gradually become accustomed to scrutinize more and more closely the working and effects of the medical schools; would learn to assign to the diploma its exact worth and no more; and finally, be led to investigate the character, ability, knowledge, and experience of individuals before placing the bodily comforts and lives of themselves and families in their keeping.

Thus, when the people, who, with our present popular form of government, have become the inverted repository of sovereignty, formerly confided to but one, shall take the control of medicine and its institutions into their own hands—when, by their enlightened numerical force, they shall again build up the barriers of distinction, which monarchy, in the olden times, and the oligarchy of our more modern governments, have ever defended between the true physician and the hypocritical pretender, but which, in the first flush of popular absolutism, have been rashly swept away—then, and not until then, will the standard of medicine be raised to the height of contemporary knowledge—only then will the departed dignity of the profession, the humiliating consequences of which aroused its members to form this Association, be fully reinstated. If, then, we would take the initiative in this great work, by a discriminative decision, with regard to the admission of new members, in favor only of such as shall possess the diploma of those colleges whose curriculum of studies is most complete and most in accordance with the advanced state of our science; and if, instead of carping and fault-finding, every well-wisher of his profession would become identified

with our Association and work with it, and thus by throwing its whole mental and moral force into the scale, and by bringing to bear its extraordinary and exclusive possession of information—information and knowledge that can be at once subordinated to the grander requirements of humanity—we shall be enabled to bring an amount of pressure of an intellectual kind to bear on the Government, that will inevitably end in making this Association the instrument of the public good, rather than the machinery to advance solely the immediate worldly interests of the profession.

This leads me to the consideration of a department of our science, which, having in view the greatest good of the greatest number, is peculiarly adapted, by bringing us into immediate communication with the people, thus to supply one of the greatest wants of the age. The department to which I now have reference is Public Hygiene, or State Medicine—a department of philosophical research, possessed of a world-wide interest, and which, laying its scientific claim upon more exact, demonstrative truths than the science of disease, is, therefore, worthy of a far higher consideration—a more authoritative recognition than has yet been awarded it, and should hold a place, in our estimation, upon the highest plane of medical education. For these reasons, and in accordance with my official duties as Chairman of a Committee of this Association on “a National Health Council,” I submitted, at the last meeting in Philadelphia, a report, suggestive of what might be accomplished through the instrumentality of such State Boards of Health as are now established or are in course of construction, when brought into co-operation with a Central Sanitary Bureau, to be inaugurated by the Government under the auspices of this Association. Whatever may be the ultimate decision in regard to the important issues therein discussed, and which, with your kind indulgence, I now propose to reopen, it has been acknowledged by some of the leading journals of our profession that the whole scheme embodies one of the grandest designs to which our Association has yet aspired. From the temper manifested at the time, however, in regard to the proposition of bringing this Association into immediate relations with the Government, I was induced to believe that if the profession was not yet educated up to a true appreciation of the prospective benefits, so much the less prepared would the laity be to comprehend

its immense proportions, or to approximate a just conception of the results that are to be accomplished through the practical application of its life and health giving provisions. Accordingly I then accepted the amendment striking out the clause respecting governmental co-operation. Only one year has elapsed since the question was thus disposed of by the conservative element of this body, and already has the professional interest therein increased to such a degree, and the store of collateral information become so accumulated and urgent, that there has been a general awakening of the public mind throughout the whole United States in favor of the proposed scheme. In evidence of this I have only to point to the recent formation of a Public Health Association, organized by leading scientific as well as medical men, who have especially devoted themselves to sanitary studies and, also, to the recent introduction in Congress of a bill for the establishment of a National Bureau of Sanitary Science, to be located in Washington.

With all due deference to the opinions of those who opposed the project suggested by me, at the meeting in Philadelphia, I still think that this Association is the most suitable medium to inaugurate the movement, because, in the language of its eloquent historian,* "when depositing the corner stone, over which has been raised a superstructure, designed to secure the honor, advance the knowledge, and extend the usefulness of our profession, the expediency of inscribing thereon, simultaneously with medical education, Hygiene, the handmaid of Medicine, received the unanimous approval of the convention. * * * At its first annual meeting in 1848, a communication was received from the Medical Department of the National Institute, enforcing upon the attention of the Association the immense and growing importance of hygiene, claiming for it an influence second to none other which could occupy their deliberations, and recommending the appointment of a permanent committee on hygiene. This intelligent appeal was heard with profound interest, and the Association at once appointed a committee." Thus an outside influence was awakened at an early day in regard to hygienic measures in connection with this organization, and the attention of philanthropists directed to it as a means for the improvement and

* Wilson Jewell, M.D., Presidential Address, 1863.

successful accomplishment of this special department of their reformatory labors. Nor have the expectations in this respect been disappointed. It is a gratifying fact that the prestige attaching to the Association, for the valuable reports, commencing with a programme for the enactment of uniform and efficient laws, in the several States, for the registration of marriages, births and deaths, and followed up by similar important measures down to the present complete and exhaustive nomenclature of diseases, continues to increase in force and influence. Who so well qualified, therefore, to develop the reformatory schemes now contemplated as those who initiated the movement, and whose labors in this direction for a quarter of a century "afford a guarantee that the future in this enterprise will be wreathed with a success that shall know no rival, and consummate a reform in the science of medicine, which, when compared with the glorious evangelical light that burst from the cell of the Wittenburg student, shall enlighten the world, and endure while time lasts."*

" Surpassing all around, even as the sun,
In morning splendor, shines above the stars."—E. C. JUDSON.

Besides, the people are rife for the movement, and have come to look upon our organization with favor and confidence. In alluding a few moments ago to the social and political relations of medicine, it was stated with general accuracy, though perhaps not with strict regard to literal historic truth, that this Association was formed in part to repair the evils resulting from that equalizing spirit, which, while, with a profound knowledge of political philosophy, it set up our admirable system of popular government, at the same time, working in the shadow of an ignorance of a medical philosophy, equally profound, tore down every protection which the subordination of *caste society* formerly afforded. That this object, at least, of its mission has been accomplished is evidenced by the popular appreciation of sanitary organizations throughout the nation. Legislators are now turning their attention to the framing of laws bearing upon questions connected with medicine, and Boards of Health for States and municipalities are rapidly multiplying everywhere. What seems to be, therefore, required in the

* Jewell, *op. cit.*

premises is to effect an union of views as to the method of action, so as to bring every State into immediate communication, by means of State Boards of Health, with a central office in Washington, to be presided over by a Commissioner or Secretary of Public Health, to be elected every four years or oftener by the Association, subject to the approval of the President of the United States, and who shall have power to make all necessary sub-appointments. The connection thus established between Federal, State and Municipal Boards of Health would cause the spread of all the latest acquisitions of science, and bring every State to a recognition of what practical measures have succeeded best in reducing sickness and mortality to a minimum, and which have the highest sanitary influence in preventing disease. Such connection would also make it an object of ambition with our best qualified members to enter on the public service, provided a sufficient pecuniary consideration be appropriated by the Federal and State Governments, to render them independent of private practice. The reasons for this provision are, first: because the claims of such practice would be constantly adverse to those of public duties, especially at times of epidemic disease, when official activity would be most needed; and secondly, because the personal relations of private practice might render it difficult for an Officer of Health to fulfill with impartiality his frequent functions of complainant; and thirdly, because, with a view to the cordial good will and co-operation of his medical brethren, it is of paramount importance that the Officer of Health should not be their rival in practice, and that his opportunities of admonitory intercourse with sick families should not be liable to abuse for the purposes of professional competition. These views are not entertained by me alone, but are in accordance with a Report of the Royal Sanitary Commission of Great Britain, which further recommends that there should be established and maintained by the public authorities in all the large cities, where scientific and medical schools exist, Public Health Laboratories. In them, not only points bearing on the general pathology of man and animals would be from time to time investigated under the best guidance, but persons would be trained to be thoroughly qualified in all medico-legal questions.

Hereby some of the scandal of *ex parte* scientific witnesses might be checked or removed. These and many other interests

that relate specially to State polity will naturally suggest themselves, such as accurate sanitary surveys of every State, *annually*, to ascertain their physical, mental, and moral force; the nature of those causes which favorably or unfavorably affect the body politic, and to investigate the statistical, topographical, and jurisprudential condition of each. Time will not permit me to dwell longer on the momentous questions involved further than to hint at some of the preliminary steps required to set the machinery at work for carrying into effect the measures proposed.

Now, while I would premise that I have no wish, even if the power were inherent, to change our organization, or to advise any essential departure from our plans of operation, I must be permitted to remark, that I believe the time has come when we must place ourselves in a more intimate relationship with the people than has hitherto ruled; in other words, the people are looking to us to utilize the capacity which this Association actually possesses, for the general welfare. The world moves fast nowadays, and however correct may be the statement already made, that this organization was created to counteract the degrading influence which the unrestricted distribution of political power, through all ranks of society, exercised upon the profession, it is certain that this state of things no longer prevails. With the extension of political liberty, and the corresponding advancement in political philosophy, the want of faith in the value of pursuits not obviously connected with mercantile gains is passing away. As civilization progresses the people become more and more convinced that science does pay the nation, and the tendency increases to turn the central power in every direction that will be likely to inure to the common good. Given this higher tone of public sentiment to deal with, it remains for this Association to take the initiative in bringing about concerted action on the part of the people. I cannot see cause for the alarm which was manifested at the time already alluded to, when the subject was introduced at our last meeting, lest the Government might exhibit a preference for erroneous theories and irregular practitioners, or require that the selection of requisite officials should depend upon political opinions. Nothing inconsistent with individual rights has occurred in England, France, Germany, or in any other nation where great co-operative societies have already

been organized for facilitating the diffusion and operation of hygienic knowledge and sanitary measures. With our civil service system properly administered there ought to be no fear of investing our popularly constituted government with too much power of being useful, if we do our duty by enlightening the masses in the fundamental principles of the calling for which we solicit their aid and support. Just as long as society is ignorant of the knowledge which will enable it to rightly judge of the fitness of a profession to its wants, so long will there be impertinent interferences and quackery. Especially so in a country like ours, where everyone is left to exercise his own judgment and choice. But let the people fully comprehend the laws by virtue of which they live, move, and have their being, and there will be no danger of their tampering with matters which pertain to their highest earthly interests. Now it is just here, to this point, that I desire particularly to draw your attention. It has been conceded that one of the greatest wants of the profession is some suitable and adequate means of communication between itself and the people. The science of hygiene is not *above* the people, but for them. Who will do in the interests of the masses, for sanitary science, what Huxley, Tyndall, Carpenter, Herschell, and others are doing for other departments of science, with better grace than the members of this Association? Let us throw away all puerile notions about the dignity of our calling, and approach the people through the only channels by which they can be reached—the newspaper and the lecture room. This is our work for the future—to educate the people.

Too long for our interest and that of our race have medical men ignored this important duty. "With dull apathy we have seen the followers of most other professions seeking to avail themselves of these elements of power, some for good, some for evil. The clergyman has not trusted alone to supernatural power in keeping alive the truths of revelation and arousing in the people a due respect for its lessons. They have watched with 'jealous care' the education of the young, and from the Sabbath school to the university they exercise the greatest control. And legislators, through their political organizations, public speeches, and control of the press, hold the masses, as it were, in the hollow of their hands."^{*}

^{*} Michigan *University Medical Journal*, July, 1871. Review of Dr. Bartholomew's address, as President of the Medical Society of that State.

Besides, there seems to be a spreading impression among the members themselves that our Association is not advancing, *pari passu*, with the progress of society, and that it fails to meet the requirements of the times.

Now, I have given much thought to this subject, and deliberately pondered all the proposed schemes for the widening of the sphere of our operations, or the heightening of our influence, and have come to the conclusion that in no other way, than that I have pointed out, can the co-ordinate interests of the profession and the people be better subserved. I believe that, being a representative body, it is exactly suited to the tastes and habits of Americans, and has much more influence than would be exerted by a more exclusive and less democratic body, as has been suggested in some of our late medical journals. I further believe that it represents as fully and completely the profession as it is possible for any organization to do. This is shown by the lively interest the great mass of practitioners take in it everywhere; they are proud of the privilege of ingress—proud of the privilege of working for its honor. And to the question, Who shall be greatest among us? they will, I am sure, as suggested by a writer just quoted,* respond with one heart and one voice, “in the memorable words spoken among the hills of Judea by Him, who was the embodiment of all that is gracious, pure and noble in our profession: ‘*Let him that would be chief among you, be your minister.*’”

Service—service for humanity—will evermore in medicine, as in all other departments of human pursuits, be the certain key to lasting honor and high reward.

Gentlemen of the Association: The period, in my opinion, has arrived when, in order to carry out fully the measures I have proposed, it will become necessary to make some alterations in the working of our organization; and if you so agree with me, I, at least, pledge myself to exert all my influence that the alterations be made cautiously, wisely, and with deliberate forethought as to consequences. I do not wish to be understood as advocating any measure in contravention of the spirit of our code. When I recommend, as one of the means of widening the usefulness of the Association, the judicious instruction of the community in the knowledge of the science of life, I do not wish it to be understood that we are to do more

* Hitchcock, *op. cit.*

than spread abroad such sound ideas of enlightened hygiene as will enable the people to co-operate with us in correcting all those formidable obliquities—physical, mental and moral—which are insidiously polluting the stream of humanity, so that the race may move onward and upward, in purity of type, to a higher and nobler manhood. In the furtherance of this end, I believe our Association will exert a powerful influence. Such publications as your President now proposes cannot be misconstrued—they cannot be tortured into violations of the code. If by any means they can, then let us amend our platform—add a new clause to our ethics—so that we do not prove recreant to that duty which even our very title of doctors, *teachers*, implies. No wisdom, however mature, could at once have originated a system competent to meet all the exigencies time and progress may give rise to. As our Association advances towards the consummation of its purposes, it must be expected that new necessities will arise, and experience in the working of the plans laid out at first will demonstrate the nature of the changes for adaptation to existing circumstances.

In conclusion, I would also respectfully suggest whether it would not be in accordance with the best interests of the Association to return to the practice of holding biennial meetings at the National Capital, and alternate ones, as now, at different points of our common country. We might thus secure all the advantages of a fixed location, for the better organizing and working of such sanitary measures as may be deemed advisable in connection with the government, and the preserving of our archives, books and other collections. At the same time, by meeting at various places every two years, we could not fail to keep up the wide-spread interest among the masses of the profession, which now prevails.

A popular writer* of the day has happily said :

“Do we desire to be strong? we shall be so on one condition—that we resolve to draw for strength upon the common fund of thought and feeling stored up within us and without us. We can only have the highest happiness by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as for ourselves, because our souls see it is good.”

But, gentlemen, whatever course you may think proper to pursue, I am sure that your objects will be the advancement of

science, the good of humanity, and the honor and glory of our beloved profession, which for a continuous period of more than two thousand years has numbered among its votaries many of the wisest and most beneficent of the long roll of sages and philanthropists. I feel, therefore, that I cannot better conclude than by bidding you, in this connection, harken! to the utterances of Missouri's honored son, *Clarum et venerabile nomen*,* pronounced eighteen years ago before this Association, and now echoed back, from his sepulchral couch, in the Capital of France.

“On the eve of the battle of the Pyramids, Napoleon exclaimed: ‘Soldiers! from the height of yon monuments forty centuries look down upon you.’ Gentlemen, from the heights of past ages countless worthies of our God-like profession point and beckon to a goal more elevated than ever attracted legislators and conquerors, Solons and Caesars!”

* Charles A. Pope, M.D., of St. Louis (Mo.), President of the American Medical Association in 1855, and who died in Paris in 1871.

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